

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 17, 2016

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER

**DOCKET TITLE:** UPDATE & DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED PROCESS FOR FY 2017-FY 2022 CITY STRATEGIC PLAN

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**ISSUE:** Proposed process for drafting an updated City Strategic Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council indicate its concurrence with the strategic planning process described in this memorandum.

**BACKGROUND:** The Alexandria City Council Strategic Plan was adopted in September 2004 and updated in January 2006 and June 2010. The 2010 updated City Strategic Plan was intended to be in effect until 2015. The FY 2017-FY 2022 City Strategic Plan (the “Plan”) is an opportunity for the newly installed City Council to work with members of the community to update the City’s strategic direction and priorities for the coming six years. At the end of 2015, City Council approved the general outline for a proposed Spring 2016 process to draft the Plan. This memorandum outlines staff’s recommendations regarding the process for updating the Strategic Plan, including content, development, community engagement, and timeframe. Based on Council feedback and the numerous Master Plan adoptions in recent years, this strategic planning process will be an update of the prior City Strategic Plan using those individual master plans to inform and construct an updated City Strategic Plan.

**DISCUSSION:** Since the presentation to City Council in December 2015, staff has developed the attached draft engagement schedule in further detail. Several tracks of engagement are highlighted in the diagram including online engagement, community meetings, a community survey, board and commission meetings and updates to City Council. In addition, City Council members will be a welcomed presence at all community meetings. Below is a description of the outlined process for your review and feedback.

### 1.) February: Plan Launch

The Plan will kick off with a communications launch starting in late February 2016. The first element will be development of a new City Strategic Plan web page which will serve as the clearinghouse for information on the Plan and related engagement activities. The

new web page will include the City's previous strategic plans, the proposed process and timeline, engagement opportunities, and the role of the community and other stakeholders in the planning process.

The website launch will be paired with community outreach through eNews, social media, video, distribution of flyers/postcards, and direct outreach to key stakeholders such as community organizations, civic and homeowner associations, and City boards and commissions.

Alexandria boards and commissions are essential to guiding City policies and their participation will be essential to this planning process. During the Plan launch, boards and commissions will be informed about the upcoming process and will be asked to assist with disseminating information to their respective networks. Some boards and commissions will be engaged more actively in the process through the community meetings and providing insight on the existing City plans that will inform the Plan.

Simultaneously, this planning process will actively use the AlexEngage online tool to complement community meetings and will be featured during the website and communications launch with an online activity focused on identifying what matters most to members of the community.

## 2.) March: Visioning

Following the Plan launch, a community visioning meeting will be held in March to identify concerns, successes, and where they would like to see Alexandria headed in the next six years. Some questions that could be asked at the visioning session include:

- What do you like about Alexandria?
- What concerns you?
- Imagine the city in six years: What is different? What has stayed the same?

Discussion from this session along with feedback from the first AlexEngage online forum will be analyzed and distilled into key themes that become the foundation for the Plan. Also, the results of the community public opinion survey undertaken in late 2015 and early 2016 will be known and released in March.

## 3.) April and May: Refining Vision and Goals

The key themes identified in the visioning meeting will be the organizing tool for this meeting to refine the vision and develop goals, keeping in mind:

- Important approved plans identified with boards and commissions
- Previous strategic plans

This meeting may be scheduled for a Saturday in order to have enough time to solicit, distill, and refine feedback all in one session. AlexEngage will be used after the meeting to virtually replicate the community meeting for those unable to attend but interested in participating.

#### 4.) June: Prioritization

After developing the vision and goals, a community meeting will be held to focus on which measured outcomes are our priority. In this meeting, the City's performance data will be shared to provide context for the discussion including results of the community survey (City Council will receive a presentation on these results prior to this discussion).

Here again, AlexEngage will be used to virtually replicate the activity at the community meeting for those unable to attend but interested in participating. In addition, relevant boards and commissions will receive updates on the Plan. Also in June the City Council will have a legislative session wherein the draft Plan will be discussed to receive input and feedback on the content and priorities prior to developing the final draft.

#### 5.) August: Final Draft

Over the summer, staff will work to finalize a draft based on previous community and City Council meetings. This final draft, once completed, will be released to the community for their review and comment.

In September, the draft City Strategic Plan will be considered for adoption by City Council. The refined engagement schedule outlined above enables the City's Results Alexandria performance management system to be adjusted to keep in alignment with the City's Strategic Plan, reflect the vision and goals that the community values, and provide measurable outcomes with targets that can help us identify and solve problems, track our progress, and share our successes.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** All costs for this project were included in the FY 2016 budget and the City Strategic Plan is on the Council-approved Long Range Planning Work Program for FY 2016. Staff time comprises the balance of the resources to undertake and to complete this project.

**ATTACHMENT:** Draft Engagement Schedule

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